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OFFICE OF CHILD CARE

Fact Sheet

77

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What are the responsibilities of the Office of Child Care?

On July 1, 2005, the Office of Child Care (formerly the Child Care Administration) became part of the Division of Early Childhood Development within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Its responsibilities include licensing and monitoring child care centers and family child care providers, and enforcing state child care policies. The Office also issues contracts and grants to child care providers so they may improve the quality of early care, and it administers the state's Child Care Credentialing System.

Which agency used to be responsible for these activities?

HB 932, passed by the 2005 General Assembly and signed by the Governor, transferred child care licensing—both family child care and center child care—from the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to MSDE. The legislation also transferred to MSDE those Child Care Development Block Grants relating to program quality, as well as the state's Child Care Credentialing System, which promotes improved qualifications for child care workers. In addition, the Governor transferred the contracts concerning the Child Care Resource and Referral Network and the Family Support Centers Network. The unit responsible for child care subsidy remains with DHR.

Why was Child Care Administration moved to MSDE?

The goal of HB 932 is to more closely align early childhood programs with K–12 education and to ensure that children have the needed skills to enter school ready to learn. A significant number of children are in child care before they start their school careers. By creating a smoother transition from child care to school, the state may be able to enhance school readiness in young children.

Doesn't MSDE already administer a number of early childhood programs?

Yes, MSDE serves young children through a variety of programs, including pre-kindergarten; Even Start; pre-school special education; Infants & Toddlers; Head Start collaboration; the child and adult care food program; non-public schools; Judy Centers; the Maryland Model for School Readiness; and early childhood program accreditation. The State Superintendent has established the Division of Early Childhood Development to house the Office of Child Care and many of these early childhood programs. For more information about the Department's early childhood programs, visit www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/readiness.

When did the transfer take place and how many staff does it affect?

The effective date of the transfer was July 1, 2005. About 200 former CCA staff are now MSDE employees and the authority regarding child care licensing, enforcement, and credentialing now resides with MSDE. Approximately 40 of the transferred staff moved to MSDE headquarters and the rest remained in 13 regional licensing offices under the leadership of regional directors.

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How does this transfer affect child care providers?

The immediate impact on child care providers is minimal. All child care providers were told about the transfer and asked to inform parents by posting a notification next to their child care license or registration. A special edition of the *Partners* newsletter in August 2005 provided more detailed information to providers. Regulations governing licensing, monitoring, and enforcement activities remain the same. Over time, however, MSDE anticipates that the improved coordination of programs and resources will mean enhanced support for child care providers in terms of professional development and training.

How does the transfer affect families who have young children in child care?

There is no immediate impact for families of young children.

Need more information?

For more information, contact the Office of Child Care, Maryland State Department of Education, by telephone at 410-767-7128 or visit the Web at http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/child_care.htm.